

OPERATIONS COORDINATING BOARD
Washington 25, D.C.

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November 14, 1956

MEMORANDUM OF MEETING: Working Group - Committee on Broadcasting and
Television (COBAT)

24th Meeting held 2:00 P.M. November 13, 1956
OCB Conference Room

Working Group Members Present:

USIA - Robert E. Button, Chairman
Frederick A. Long
CIA - 2 Representatives present
ICA - Gerald Winfield
State - Sidney B. Jacques
T. H. E. Nesbitt, Chairman TPIB
Defense - Col. M. E. Williamson
White House - Oren Stephens
OCB Staff - Leslie Brady
Ralph Busick
Marjorie Denny

Oct 21
1. The minutes of the September 12 meeting were adopted as written. With reference to Item 2, the Chairman informed the Committee that the draft of a paper to the Board Assistants on the Lebanese TV project was not yet ready for circulation, that an inquiry will be made as to recent developments in Beirut which might influence the status of a split paper, and that if and when a draft is circulated, attention will be called to new facts or circumstances.

2. With reference to the Pakistan Army TV project, it was reported that IBS Television had supplied all the information possible in answer to request from the field. The project has not been financed as yet but all possible data have been forwarded.

3. A lengthy discussion was held on the central evaluation problem of international broadcasting, which eventually will cover TV as well as radio. It is felt certain that one of the recommendations of the forthcoming Schramm Report will call for the organization of a single unit to assemble and evaluate evidence of the overall effectiveness of U.S. international broadcasting on a continuing basis. The Committee decided not to defer consideration of this problem until after the Schramm report is released. It was agreed that a sub-committee chaired by Mr. Oren Stephens would initiate a paper on the subject for COBAT consideration.

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4. A discussion of the status of the Libyan radio project brought out the fact that the mission has now expressed increased interest in having the project continue. Therefore ICA has brought up to date the airgram to Tripoli originally drafted and coordinated through COBAT, and this message is now being considered by the State Department. The State Department representative informed that, although State's position was not yet firm, the present thinking was that the project should be held in abeyance because of political considerations. The ICA representative pointed out that Libya has the money for this project and would proceed to spend it on a radio project, without our advice or influence, if we continued to hold the matter in abeyance. In the negotiations on the subject, USIA requested adequate insurance of programming influence should such a station be established.

5. With reference to the status of broadcasting in Saigon, informal reports indicated a shift in the situation. It was therefore agreed that the ICA representative and the Chairman would seek clarification of the situation through their agency channels.

6. Concerning Eurovision, the Chairman reported that the summary of Mr. Trimmer's report had not yet been circulated to the European PAO's concerned, as agreed at the last meeting, but instead the entire report would be circulated requesting suggestions as to how best to proceed. The Committee agreed that the papers prepared by Messrs. Trimmer and Bauer had served the purpose of high-lighting the difficulties of U.S. assistance to Eurovision, and emphasized the delicacy of the situation.

Discussion brought out agreement that the type of operation in which the U.S. might participate to advantage would be a first trans-Atlantic TV hookup, broadcasting to Europe an outstanding American event. Such a development is of particular interest to USIA. The Chairman reported that USIA was currently in negotiation with a private manufacturer who has American rights to a method of long-range TV via cable. It is not clear yet whether this method would be satisfactory for West to East transmission, but there is enough evidence to indicate that it might be worth some financial investment for further experimentation. COBAT therefore requested the TPIB to render a technical opinion concerning the possibility of this method. (Attachment 1)

7. The contents of Telegram 303 from Tripoli, November 6, were discussed by the Committee. In view of the urgency of improving the signal strength of the VOA Arabic transmissions, the TPIB Chairman suggested consideration be given to use of the RFE 50 KW medium-wave equipment now stored in the Bremen Overseas Free Port Zone of Germany. The TPIB Chairman also strongly recommended that the two 150 KW mediumwave transmitters at Munich, now operated in tandem as a 300 KW transmitter beamed toward the Satellites, be split and one beamed toward Libya.

It was decided that TPIB should be asked for recommendations concerning any available RFE equipment, with specific reference to Telegram 303 from Tripoli. (Attachment 2)

8. The next meeting will be at the call of the Chairman.

Ralph R. Busick
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